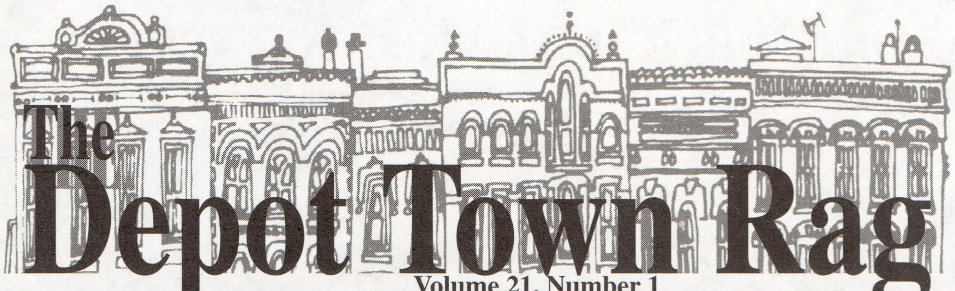


The Depot Town Rag

Volume 21, Number 1

A community overlooked by *Time*
..and *Life*,
and *Newsweek*,
and *USA Today*,
and...

100% FREE *RAG* CONTENT

March/
April 2006

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. The Old Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

"We've had a lot of requests, but we're going to do it anyway." -*Rag* editor

Not the same old *Rag*

Ypsilanti's Depot Town Assocation began publishing *The Depot Town Rag* in 1976 and kept it up for twenty years. Now, after a ten-year hiatus, *The Rag* is back with us and there's nothing to be done about it. Association officers have solicited the original editor and, in his retirement, he has nothing to do but nose around the neighborhood and see who has stories to tell. Look for them monthly for the next year.

Neighbors are warned to tell their tales carefully and speak clearly. Still, some of the news may become a bit skewed in the transmission, but they will always be terribly local and at least as charming as the storytellers, themselves.

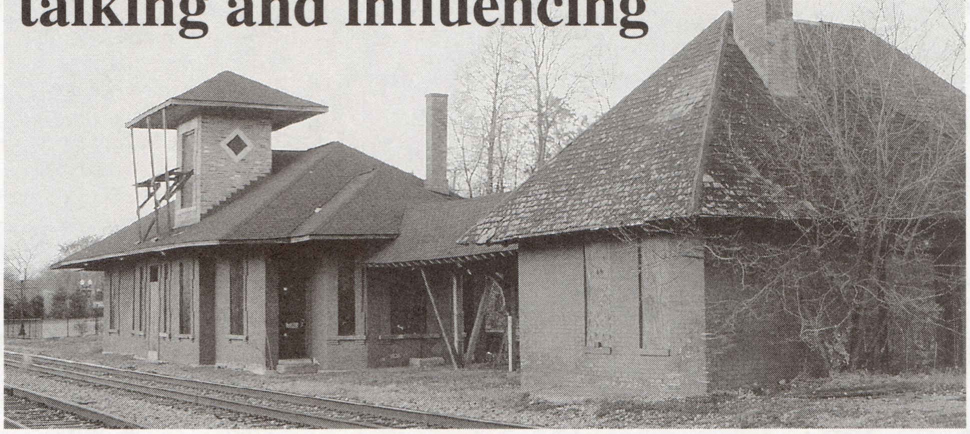
The district has changed a lot since the last issue in 1996, and regular readers are clamoring for updates and attitudes. Count on it.

You will see no Corporate News here and very little international, national or state news unless it relates directly to the depot district. Such reports are too homogenized for this block. We like it fresh and raw and local. Our stories reach all the way from the river to the railroad tracks. That's been our style in the past and we see no reason for changing. Rupert Murdock has not yet discovered this tiny enclave of sanity, so let's keep this to ourselves.

One of the biggest changes in the past decade is the fact that Depot Town has gone to the Internet. Many businesses and organizations have their own Websites and you can even order your meal by cell phone while you're driving on I-94. But you can't read *The Rag* while driving, so maybe that's why they invited us to crank up the presses again.

Print media survives down here. John and Pattie Harrington have moved their Standard Printing Company down the street to greatly expanded quarters in the old MESC building and they'll be printing these sheets for as long as our readers can stand it.

Depot flap gets the neighborhood talking and influencing



When a Big Ann Arbor Developer purchased the decrepit depot at Ypsilanti, folks up and down the block figured Depot Town had finally entered the Big Time

Anyone who likes to read other people's mail will enjoy the Website flailing the current owner of the infamous depot, our block's namesake.

"Bill and I took a lot of time before deciding to go public with our disgust over the condition of the Depot," says past DTA president Sandee French. "If you go to the Website www.ypsilantidepot.com, you will see all the letters that have been written to Dennis Dahlmann, the owner of the Depot, since 2001. There are letters from the DDA, asking him to put windows where there are planks of board, remove the scaffolding from the second story that has been there for 15 years, and do some landscaping. In other words, make the Depot not look abandoned."

"Dahlmann hasn't broken any laws," says French's editorial. "He just doesn't respect our community."

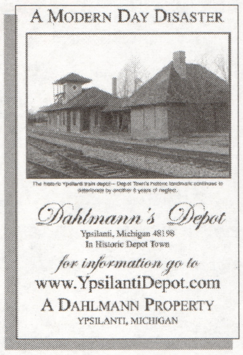
In conclusion, the proponents note, "After seven letters and some four and a half years, the Dahlmanns write back."

"Mr. Dahlmann says he is taken back by the tone of the last letter by Mr. McKeever. Dalhmann indicates that he has wonderful properties in Ann Arbor like the Bell Tower, Campus Inn, and the seven-story City Center Office Building. He speaks glowingly of their latest project of restoring a dilapidated, rundown old hotel in Madison, Wisconsin.

"In his letter, Dennis Dahlmann indicated there is nothing left to save of the Depot, that he has discontinued discussions with his own architects about the Depot, and he has instructed that all further correspondence regarding this matter be sent to his attorney..."

Even the *Ann Arbor News* weighed in on the depot flap with a story in January, "Lobby Starts for Depot Fix-up, Merchants Begin Public Campaign Aimed at Owner," and then followed up with an ambiguous editorial in a later issue.

The Website includes letters from March 13, 2001 through November 16, 2005. They come from DTA president, the Depot Town Downtown Development Authority, supporters of Dahlmann, and from Dennis Dahlmann himself.



A MODERN DAY DISASTER

The historic Ypsilanti train depot -- Depot Town's historic landmark continues to deteriorate by another 5 years of neglect.

Dahlmann's Depot

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
In Historic Depot Town

for information go to
www.YpsilantiDepot.com

A DAHLMANN PROPERTY
YPSILANTI, MICHIGAN

Posters appeared in district shop windows

"What's new on this old block in the last ten years?"

Adapted from Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle"

"Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with *Frog Island* herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the *district at the depot*. He saw at a distance the lordly *Huron*, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, the reflection of a purple cloud, or the *train passing through*, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the *charming commercial community*...

"For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; eventually wandering down to *East Cross Street again*...

"For Rip Van Winkle was old and gray,
And *ten* summers had passed away...
Yes, *ten* winters of snow and frost
Had he in his *Frog Island* slumber lost;
Yet his love for stories was all the same..."

"Hey, what's up?" asked Rip, as he stumbled out into East Cross Street from the bridge to Frog Island. Rubbing ten years of sleep out of his eyes, Van Winkle marveled at the "Cool City" banners waving from the streetlight cross poles.

"Welcome back to the old neighborhood," we enjoined. "Let us take the next six months to catch you up on all the progress you have missed in your slumber. Just look at the local strides on these three pages of *The Rag*. We'll continue to regale you with updates for the rest of the year...."

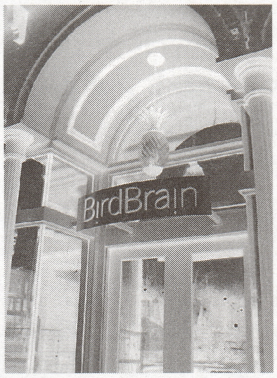
Rip Van Winkle emerges from a ten-year nap and is brought up to date by the resurgence of the old neighborhood's cheesy little newsletter

Gordon's Five & Dime pleases kids of every age

Watch for kids and their acoutrements at #23

Katherine Gordon marks the hours in her unique shop by the clientelle: From opening to 3 it's moms and strollers; from 3-5 it's bikes and scooters; from 5-6 it's the after work crowd. "On Sundays," she says, "it's the 'Steeler Nation,' grabbing some popcorn after watching the football game on TVs down the street. In addition to popcorn, you'll find ice cream, penny candy, and old fashioned toys and home goods. This popular kid shop brings out the "kid" in just about everybody.

Bird Brain is block's first real national headquarters



BirdBrain, at 52 E. Cross, was born of one great idea, an innovative grit product designed to help birds digest the vast new amount of seed they were being served up by an American public fascinated with birds and bird feeders. That was 1995. Since then, BirdBrain, the brainchild of husband and wife entrepreneurs, Courtney and Christine King, has taken flight in several new directions. From hummingbird feeders and hand-painted Adirondak chairs, to Bohemian crystal globes and ceramic vases, BirdBrain is a leading designer and maker of decorative and functional products for the home and garden.

Harrington's Standard Printing Company moved down the street

HEIDELBERG

Dobrovich hangs on to the new Heidelberg press at Standard Printing. The Old Heidelberg is off to a print shop in Pakistan.

Standard Printing Company has been serving Ypsilanti since 1909, but moved to Depot Town in 1939. John and Pattie Harrington moved the business a block farther to the east in the summer of 2005.

After moving tons of printing equipment from 35 East Cross to 120 East Cross, the biggest item on the movers' list did not sit still very long. After just a few short months, the "Old Heidelberg" press was sold to a print shop in Pakistan and an even larger and more modern version replaced it.

Pressman Steve Dobrovich tells of sleepless nights anticipating his new "toy" that can make 12,000 impressions an hour and can print two colors simultaneously. That's quite a jump from the 2500 impressions per hour with the previous press.

"It's bigger and faster," says Steve, "and we can print *way more* additional" work with the newer technology.

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Nelson Amos Studio

Photo by Dan Worden, Eastern Echo

Artist sets up shop in Depot Town building

-Excerpts from Melanie Lebert,
Staff Writer, The Eastern Echo
Wednesday, January 26, 2005

If a picture can paint 1,000 words, there are many to be seen at Nelson Amos Studio.

Nelson Amos' original art includes portraits, landscapes, still life and local scenes. Amos also offers original framing done in the back of the studio. He began painting in the basement of his home and was going to add on, but decided to rent space instead.

"It was a hobby that got out of hand," Amos said.

Amos was looking for a space to rent when he drove past the building one day.

"It had wonderful windows, perfect for an art studio," he said.

The building that houses the studio is located in Depot Town, a place Amos enjoys.

"It's like a gym within Ypsi," he said...

...Nelson Amos Studio opened Nov. 19, 2004. It is located at 9 E. Cross St. in Depot Town. The studio offers samples of brownies, cookies and specialty items from Zingerman's. Free coffee or tea is available with any purchase.

The studio's hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday and Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. The studio is closed Monday.

See this old block on the World Wide Web:

www.depottown.com

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and the River Street Bakery

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of hearth baked artisan
breads available Monday,
Wednesday and Friday
evenings

An academic pans the professionals

Reports of our demise are greatly exaggerated

It's always exciting when Our Town gets wider coverage in the regional media. In the following newswriting criticism, a WCC journalism instructor [our editor] adds his usual notes to portions of *USA Today's* January coverage of Ypsilanti [Auto Woes Manufacture City's Decline]. Mark Twain's dictum in our headlline seem the perfect point of view for the current controversy.

Excerpts:

1. "In some neighborhoods, rows of homes sit boarded up. In others, meticulously preserved Victorians sit next to crumbling houses." *Evidence? Which streets? I cannot find any. Can you get a photo? There are two boarded-up houses down River Street, but can two create a row? Any others in town?*

2. "They're considering adding a local income tax, but critics argue that will just put more of a hardship on financially struggling city residents." *No attribution. Who are these critics? Can you back this up? Get names.*

3. "Folks like restaurant owner French hope access to the universities will change Ypsilanti into a hip urban center. 'We're seeing factories close, but Ypsilanti might end up being better off.'" *What did Linda really say? In the telephone interview, she spoke of the global economy, and showed her usual positive optimism for doing business in Ypsilanti. And she told of the 30% increase in her business the past year...but that didn't get into the story.*

Good news travels more slowly—especially in the regional corporate media—and reporter Sharon Silke Carty had three Michigan cities to choose from for the target of her *USA Today* piece. Local readers speculate over whether Ypsi won or lost that contest.

Sure, *USA Today* was created by an Ypsi kid, Peter F. Kuchnicki and his creative associates, but many in the journalism business still refer to it as "a newspaper for stupid people in a hurry." Perhaps a true investigative report needs to be more than two substantial paragraphs.

"Dennis, the Drum Man" still keeps the beat

Dennis's Music at 27 East Cross brings Dennis Runyon's long professional experience out to the street. After laying down the rhythm for big names like Mitch Ryder, Dennis and his partner Pat Pringle can fix just about any drum situation. The drums out front are the actual trap he started playing when he was seven years old.

Shelia M. Johnson Lander C. McLoyd
Law Offices
Johnson & McLoyd, PLC
Depot Town
308 N. River Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198
734.544.4500 FAX 734.669.9081

Greek heritage continues here in Demetrius's town

Follow your nose to Apotheke at 50 East Cross and you'll find bath products handmade by proprietor Sue Okonski. Before she took her Polish name, she was Susan Armelagous, but not necessarily related to Demetrius Ypsilanti. Sue was day editor at *The Ypsilanti Press,* then ran her shop in Milan for a number of years. Now in her special location directly across from the depot, Apotheke is one of the best smelling shops on the block.

Weber's Drug Store is long gone, but the tradition of a neighbohood apothecary lives on in Sue Okonski's "apothecary."

Okonski's handmade product fills her colorful shop window across from the depot

Hot times in the district's unique eateries

Where else can you sit by a fireplace for a drink without going 300 miles north to a ski resort? Where else but in the heart of Ypsilanti's Historic District! In Depot Town.

Fireplaces have appeared and reappeared at our popular restaurants over the years. One can cuddle fireside at three different locations on East Cross Street.

Perhaps the most infamous fireplace in the block was in an upstairs apartment on the north side of the street that had been rented by an outlaw motorcycle club. In the Sixties, neighbors convinced them to move by dropping a charge of dynamite down the chimney one night. It worked; they left.

Gentler exclamations of fireplace emotion are perhaps better expressed by fireside aficianadoes from earlier times:

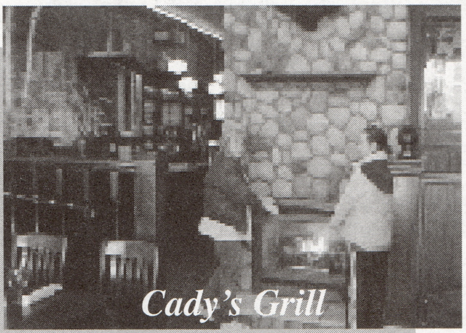
"To fireside happiness,
to hours of ease
Blest with that charm,
the certainty to please."
- *Human Life*,
Samuel Rogers, [1763-1855]

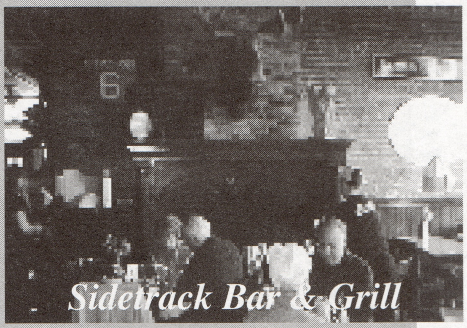
"To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life."
-*Epistle to Dr. Blacklock*,
Robert Burns [1789]

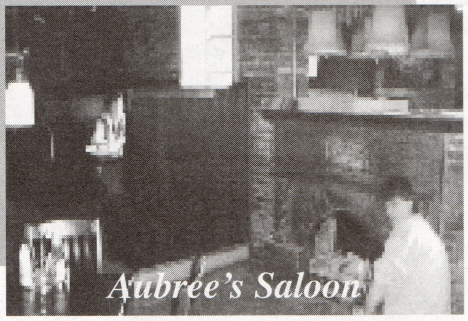
"There is no fireside,
howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!"
-*Resignation*, Longfellow [1849]

"A fireside is a great opiate."
-*A Few Thoughts on Sleep*,
Leigh Hunt [1784-1859]

"You are a King by your own Fireside,
as much as any Monarch in his Throne."
-*Don Quixote*,
Miguel de Cervantes [1547-1616]


Cady's Grill


Sidetrack Bar & Grill


Aubree's Saloon

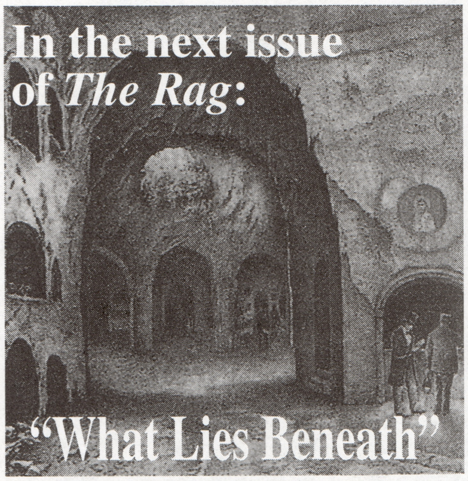
Ten-Year Review to continue

Catching up on ten years of continuous progress in this block understandably overflows our meager six pages in this back-on-the-street issue. The short blurbs in this spread cannot begin to fill in the blanks. The next several issues of *The Rag* will continue the report so, if yours is one of the businesses younger than ten years, get ready to tell your story—and we'll see you in *The Rag* this spring.

Watch for our editor and his note pad. Not only will "Rip Van Winkle" be amazed at the changes down here, so will our loyal clientele. They've been coming down here for years and they always like to see new ventures on the block.

Monthly drawing COUPON (March 2006)
Win 25 Depot Town Dollars
and an interview with *The RAG*

Name ________________________________
Street ________________ City ___________ ZIP __________
Phone ________________ Email ________________
Deposit this coupon with any participating Depot Town business


In the next issue of *The Rag*:
"What Lies Beneath"

...the sordid—and slightly embellished—story of the our fabled tunnels that may even connect with Oprah's book club; underpasses, subways, shafts, burrows, holes, mines, and chambers in Ypsi.

Depot Town Rag
Volume 14, Number 11 *"All the news in one block in one month."*

"All the news that fits, we print"
A bi-monthly publication of
the Depot Town Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 970235
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

2006 *Rag* publication schedule:
First week of
March/April, May/June, July,
August, September, October,
November, December

Deadlines for announcements:
15th of of April, July, August, September,
October, November

To the editor:
thomasdodd@comcast.net

The Depot Town Association, Inc.

Gary McKeever, President
Pattie Harrington, Vice President
Ray Strassel, Treasurer
Sandee French,
Secretary & Past President
Kim Tucker,
Marketing Committee chair

DTA meets at 6:30 p.m on the third Wednesday of each month in the conference room of Harrington's Standard Printing, 120 East Cross Street.

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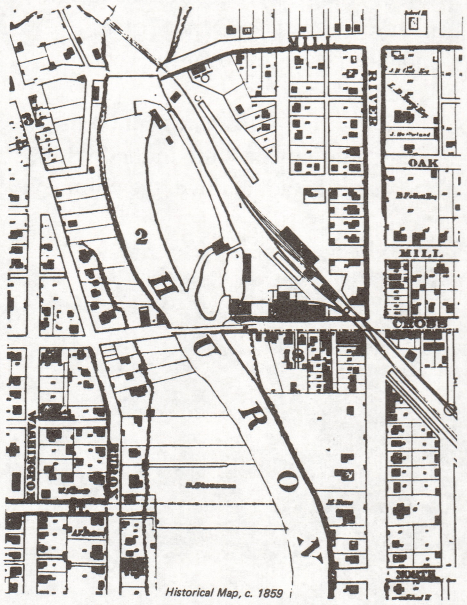
Same old crossing, but a new ethic

Nostalgia's not what it used to be. Storytelling seems to be a by-product of historic preservation and Ypsi's old railroad district certainly has had enough stories to keep conversations lively these past years.

The first train left Detroit for Ypsilanti on February 6, 1838. In the next 138 years, folks on this block have not tired of telling what happened, what's going to happen, or what should happen along these tracks. And they stand right out in the street when they pass along their local lore.

Although not the original business district in old Ypsilanti, the district "down at the depot" quickly became the locus of the hottest news in town.

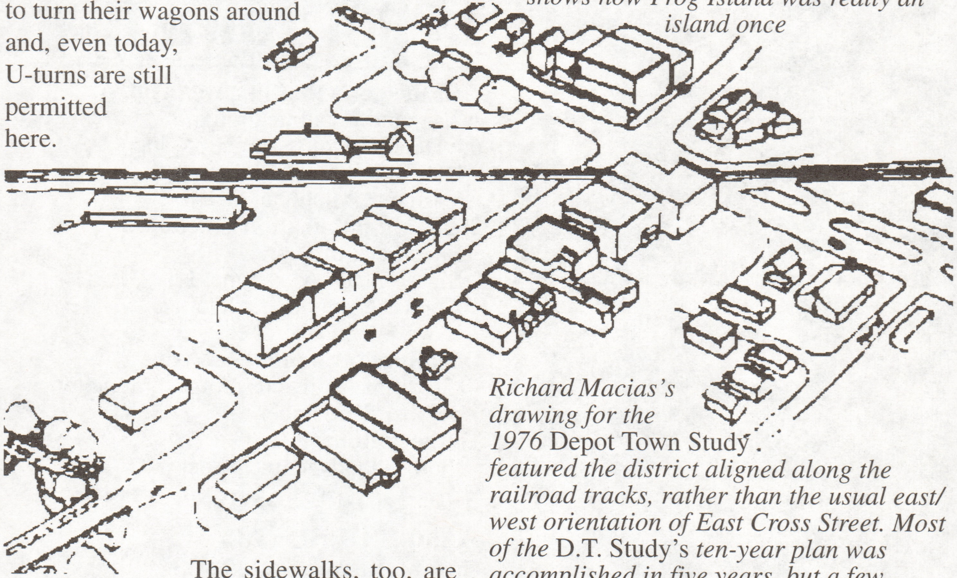
The traffic to the depot brought a vitality and vigor that have remained long after the trains stopped stopping here.



Historical Map, c. 1859

One of the earliest maps of Depot Town shows how Frog Island was really an island once

The broad street enabled teams of horses to turn their wagons around and, even today, U-turns are still permitted here.



Richard Macias's drawing for the 1976 Depot Town Study *featured the district aligned along the railroad tracks, rather than the usual east/west orientation of East Cross Street. Most of the* D.T. Study's *ten-year plan was accomplished in five years, but a few properties remain outstanding.*

The sidewalks, too, are wide and hospitable and encourage citizens to stop mid-stride and greet people. We're often accused to talking to people we don't know yet, but that does not last long. In neighborhoods like this, you are welcome to become part of the community on your first visit. Tradition births easily here.

Visit Depot Town on the Web:

www.depottown.com

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On the street in 2006:

[new in the last ten years in italics]

River Street South:

Ypsilanti Food Co-op
McMullen Architects
Johnson & McLoyd, PLC
Utilities Instrumentation

South side of East Cross Street:

Harrington's Standard Printing
Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Collection
Miller Motors
Sidetrack Bar & Grill
Frenchie's
Bird Brain, Inc.
Apotheke
The Hair Station
Enchanted Florist
Dreamland Theater
Café Luwak
Paula's Barber Shop
Cady's Grill
Citizen Bank ATM
Quizno's
Olde Towne Coin & Gold
Spa Burjon
Creation Hair Station
City Body
Depot Town Auto Glass
Esquire Interiors
The Huron River
Riverside Park

North side of East Cross Street:

Frog Island Park
Nelson Amos Portrait Studio
Salt City Antiques
The Old Caboose
Freighthouse
Ypsilanti Farmers' Market
Quinn's Essentials
Gordon's Five & Dime
Dennis's Music Shop
Silver Spoon Antiques
Jim MacDonald's Antiques & Apple Annie's Vintage Clothing
Cheeky Monkey
EMU-AAUP
The Gifted Basket
Aubree's Saloon
Sticks Pool & Pub
Tiki Rooftop Bar
Railroad tracks

River Street North:

MCRR depot
Thompson Block
Garrett's Florist & Garden Center

May 6

Ypsi Street Rods Show

Local dudes and dudettes show their four-wheeled stuffon the streets of their own hometown Riverside Park

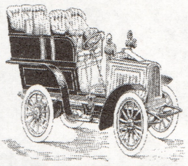
May 20

Ypsi PRIDE Day

Who can remember what the acronym stood for? Bring your rake and wheelbarrow anyway.

May 21

Michigan Vintage Volkwagen Club



in Riverside Park

May 29

Memorial Day Parade

Stops for services on Memorial Bridge (see historic WWI markers), then up the hill to Highland Cemetery

June 4

Orphan Car Show

Sponsored by the Ypsilanti Automotive Heritage Collection in cooperation with the City of Ypsilanti and sponsored by the Walter P. Chrysler Museum. More info: 734-482-5200. (Chrysler's mom once ran a rooming house on River Street. Welcome back, Walt.)

June 7-September 14

Depot Town Cruise Nights

Every Thursday night—all summer long

June 30-July 2

Michigan Camaro Fest

Friday even, Sat & Sun
Riverside Park

July 4th

Independence Day Parade

Michigan's oldest 4th of July parade

July 7 & 8

Michigan Elvisfest 2006

Riverside Park

The best Elvis Tribute Artists in North America perform unique and entertaining acts, paying tribute to an American icon.

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DEPOT TOWN

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Tiki Bar Patio

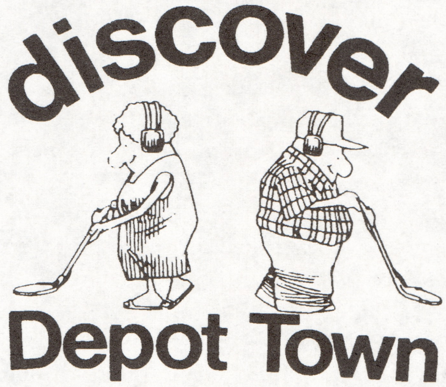
39 E. Cross Street • 483-1873

10% off your entire meal

RAGTIME

Refrigerator magnet goes here

There's always something exciting going on in this old block. Come one down and wave at the trains with us.



Richard Guindon's 1980s cartoon (above) in the *Detroit Free Press* never made it to T-shirts on this block. We're still here. Where is Guindon?

[6 December 2002] Suzanne Tobin, Washington Post comics editor: "…do you know what happened to Guindon. I used to love his work too."

Dan Piraro, cartoonist: "I was a big fan of Richard Guindon too, but I have no idea what happened to him. I read a long time ago that he just got tired of doing a joke a day and moved on to other things. I'm not sure what, though."

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July 22

Michigan Brewers' Festival

More than 30 different Michigan breweries, 100 different beers. Huge beer tents, live music, and good food in an outdoor setting. Michigan Brewers Guild, 517-327-5004, shanl@michiganbrewersguild.org

August 14-19

United Association of Plumbers & Pipefitters

August 18-20

Ypsilanti Heritage Festival

Depot Town, Riverside Park, Frog Island Park. 28th annual hometown hoopla: parades, Millionaire's Party, great music, classic cars, historic home tour, arts & crafts, Rubber Duckie race

TBA

Festival Latino

Riverside Park & Frog Island

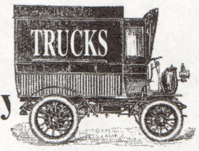
Mix salsa, culture, food, dance and community information with a touch of soccer. A celebration of Hispanic heritage. Produced by Latinos Unidos, Inc.

August 30

Fire Truck Show

October 7

Antique Truck Historical Society



3rd show

December 3

Holiday Home Tour

Sponsored by Meals on Wheels

TBA

Midnight Madness Sale

Merchants open until midnight and restaurants offer specials. It's a mad, mad, mad, mad weekend with sidewalk sales.

January 31

New Year Jubilee

Downtown, Depot Town, all around the park; dozens of performances for families

SIDETRACK
Bar and Grill

rated by GQ Magazine - Top best Burger in the country

Reserve
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